

23 OCT 1978

PMS

78-3332

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

FROM : John F. Blake
Deputy Director for AdministrationSUBJECT : Follow-up

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1. DDA management has thoroughly reviewed the currently proposed Performance Appraisal Report (PAR). Our effort focused on both the format and content of the report with specific emphasis on items suggested for mandatory comment.

2. We definitely support the continuing objective of improving employee performance appraisals. However, we do suggest that introduction of any new format concerning performance appraisal be withheld pending completion of the consultant review of the entire Agency personnel system. It may be appropriate to offer the currently developing appraisal system to the outside experts as an alternative to the present system.

3. In that context we address the continuing development of the performance evaluation system.

A. Annual Work Plan (AWP) - The Directorate of Administration views the Annual Work Plan as a replacement for the Letter of Instruction (LOI) and as such it is entirely satisfactory. We are of the opinion that it can be a very useful document in aiding the performance evaluation of many personnel. But, we support its use, as with the LOI, on an optional basis, by Directorate, and suggest instructions to that effect in the final Performance Appraisal Report.

In considering the form itself we recommend that Section A, Employee's Job, be deleted. Where the position fits in the staffing pattern adds little to the

substance of the PAR and supervisory responsibilities including number of employees supervised is addressed elsewhere in the report. With respect to Section B, Work Objectives, Goals, and Priorities - we suggest deletion of the word "Objectives" in the title and the instruction.

B. Performance Appraisal Report - Generally speaking, we have little difficulty with the PAR format. Minor exceptions include a suggestion that the social security number be added to the General Information Section and that the employee Comments Section, which we fully support, be relocated to follow the reviewing officer comments. As concerns content, we agree that the 1-7 scale should be more precisely defined. It seems that the current descriptors are quantitative rather than qualitative. They apply to a production type environment with objective standards of performance. The evaluation is comparing performance against "formulated expectations" as opposed to a comparison of the performance of "others doing similar work." Additionally, we believe the lines of demarcation between each number rating are not clear. The difference between "constant" and "continual" or "usually" and "consistently" is not clear. It may be appropriate to establish a small working group with representation from each Directorate to develop an acceptable set of definitions for the seven point scale.


The last item concerning the PAR involves the feasibility of requiring narrative comment on EEO, safety, security, cost consciousness, ability to write Fitness Reports and management ability. While these items are very important, mandatory reporting tends to overload the PAR and will inevitably result in perfunctory comments with little real meaning. As an alternative, there could be instruction to comment on those items only when there is actually something worthwhile, either positive or negative to say. As regards EEO, safety, and security, it seems appropriate to suggest comment only for supervisory and managerial personnel.

C. Evaluation of Potential - As an alternative to the "Evaluation of Potential" section, we suggest instructions for the PAR narrative be written so as to encourage rating officials to discuss their view of the rated employee's potential. This would assist panel members in deliberations concerning potential and would at the same time allow the employee opportunity to comment without requiring a specific section for "Evaluation of Potential."

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4. Whatever format is eventually agreed upon, one point should be paramount. That is that continuing effort should be applied to avoid an overly complicated or lengthy employee appraisal system.



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